



# MENDOCINO COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION

PAUL A. TICHININ, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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INTEGRITY • CUSTOMER SERVICE • ACCOUNTABILITY • TEAMWORK • INNOVATION • PASSION

December 1, 2014

Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Received & Inspected

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FCC Mail Room

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

Dear Commissioner:

On behalf of Mendocino County Office of Education and the students of Mendocino County, I am writing to express our support for the increase to the E-Rate cap proposed by Chairman Wheeler. Over the last decade, the E-Rate program has played an essential role in the helping schools keep pace with the technological innovations that are vital to preparing students for today's global economy. Like the rest of the nation, California's schools serve diverse communities in very different geographic settings and it is an ongoing challenge to provide access and equity in classroom technology.

**The cap increase is an essential and reasonable response to the growing demand on bandwidth.** When E-Rate was created in 1997, the common connectivity rate was 50 kbps, the average computer was a 20 pound desktop, only 22% of Rate program has played an essential role in the helping schools keep pace with the technological innovations that are vital to preparing students for today's global economy. Like the rest of the nation, California's schools serve diverse communities in very different geographic settings and it is an ongoing challenge to provide access and equity in classroom technology.

**The cap increase is an essential and reasonable response to the growing demand on bandwidth.** When E-Rate was created in 1997, the common connectivity rate was 50 kbps, the average computer was a 20 pound desktop, only 22% of children aged 0 to 17 lived in a household with internet access, and the E-Rate cap was \$2.25 billion. Today, the common connectivity rate is 100 mbps (200 times faster than 1997 speeds), the average computer fits in the palm of your hand, 81% of children aged 0 to 17 live in a household with internet access, and the yet the E-Rate cap is still only \$2.4 billion. Despite massive advances in technology and connectivity, and a 400% increase in bandwidth demand, the E-Rate cap has remained almost entirely stagnant for two decades. The proposed increase would directly address this critical problem. Without this assistance, many schools will be unable to provide the access to technology that has become crucial to preparing students for success in life and work.

**The proposed increase will allow California schools to make significant and sustainable investments in technology infrastructure.** According to data collected by California's K-12 High Speed Network, more than 2,000 California schools do not have adequate access to basic broadband (i.e. 10Mbps) services. Last year, California's transition to the next generation online assessments highlighted significant gaps in connectivity across the state. The proposed cap increase would provide the increased resources and fiscal stability schools need to pursue serious and scalable investments in technology infrastructure.

We are united with the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA) in our concern that significant action is needed to help schools keep pace with technology needs. Four of the schools in our county have a broadband connection of 1.5mbps or less. The proposed increase in the E-Rate cap is vitally important to schools throughout California and the nation, and has our very strong support.

MCOE urges you to support the proposed E-Rate cap increase when it comes before the Commission on December 11<sup>th</sup>. Please contact us if we can provide additional information on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Lamken  
Executive Director, Technology/Human Resources

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